



Thomas A. Schatz, *President*
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Dear Senator,

I understand that you are currently finalizing negotiations on the so-called bipartisan infrastructure package, including provisions that would radically change laws and regulations related to broadband access. On behalf of the more than one million members and supporters of the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste, I strongly urge you to reject all of these proposals, which will harm innovation in the most vibrant segment of the U.S. economy and create an even larger federal government footprint in the daily lives of every American.

The proposals being discussed include digital redlining, federal rate regulation, imposing additional data collection requirements, and expanding the authority of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and National Telecommunications and Information Service (NTIA). The NTIA would be given the authority to set speed benchmarks and ignore FCC maps to determine which areas of the country are unserved. These provisions will also result in duplicative broadband overbuild in communities that already have broadband available at or above the FCC minimum threshold of 25/3 Mbps. Congress has already made funding available that could be used for broadband infrastructure by state and local governments as part of the \$350 billion provided in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which does not supersede current laws and regulations. This money should be used first before Congress moves forward with a new set of broadband laws and regulations that will harm innovation and lead to fewer unserved areas of the country receiving the benefit of the digital economy.

The proposals being considered for the infrastructure legislation would significantly increase government control over broadband and access to the internet. None of them are necessary or advisable, since the [investment](#) of more than \$1.8 trillion by the private sector to create the technology necessary to build the world's most resilient networks, a competitive marketplace, and mostly light touch regulations enabled the U.S. telecommunications network to hold up far better than its global counterparts during the pandemic. In June 2020, a few months into the lockdowns and shutdowns, fixed and mobile broadband [download speeds](#) in the U.S. were 150 percent and 75 percent higher, respectively, than the comparable global median download speeds. The best path for getting more Americans access to the internet is not through increased regulation, but by enabling a free market to promote new access points.

For these reasons, I again strongly urge you to oppose the inclusion of provisions in any infrastructure package that would create digital redlining, expand FCC and NTIA authorities, allow for federal rate regulation, or impose additional data collection requirements that would increase costs to taxpayers. The impact of these proposals on taxpayers, consumers, the economy, and the telecommunications industry has not been considered by any House or Senate committee, and that is the very least that must be done before any of them move forward.

Sincerely,

Tom Schatz